

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1095

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 4385

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (P A R A 2 .)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ETRD, GT

SUBJECT: DIRECTOR OF TOURISM SPEAKS OUT FOR "OPEN SKIES"

1. SUMMARY: GUATEMALAN INSTITUTE OF TOURISM DIRECTOR, ALVARO ARZU, HAS FORMALLY ADVISED THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, OTTO BLOCK, THAT THE INSTITUTE FAVORS OPEN SKIES IN ORDER TO PROMOTE TOURISM. THE DIRECTOR TOLD THE PRESS THAT HE FAVORS THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OF GUATEMALA TO COMPANIES WISHING TO OPERATE EITHER REGULAR OR CHARTER FLIGHTS. HE STATED ONE POTENTIAL CARRIER HAS OFFERED TO BRING A MINIMUM OF 75,000 TOURISTS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATIONS THROUGH PROMOTION OF GUATEMALA IN A \$500,000 PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN. SSR ARZU TAKES THE POSITION THAT LOWER FARES EXIST BETWEEN NEW YORK AND EUROPEAN CAPTIALS WITH FLIGHT TIMES OF 8 HOURS THAN FOR A NEW YORK TO GUATEMALA FLIGHT WHICH ONLY REQUIRES A LITTLE OVER 4 HOURS. HE FEELS THERE IS INSUFFICIENT COMPETITION TO BRING DOWN FARES. NO ACTION REQUESTED. END SUMMARY

2. SR. ARZU RECOMMENDED A 4-YEAR PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF BOTH INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL SERVICES. THIS WOULD COME FROM EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENT, NEW ROUTES, ATTENTION TO UNCLASSIFIED

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FARES AND BETTER FACILITIES FOR CHARGER FLIGHTS.

3. COMMENT: AT LEAST ONE US CARRIER IS SEEKING NEW AUTHORITY TO SERVE GUATEMALA. EASTERN AIRLINES HAS MADE ITS INTERESTS KNOWN. THE ATTITUDE OF THE TWO CARRIERS SERVING THE US, PAN AMERICAN AND AVIATECA, HAVE NOT BEEN EXPRESSED. HOWEVER THIS DEVELOPS, IT IS CLEAR THAT

TOURISM OFFICIALS AND INDUSTRY INTERESTS WOULD WELCOME
EXPANSION OF SERVICES. SR. AARZU NOTED A FEWDAYS PRE-
VIOUSLY THAT TOTAL TOURISM IS OFF 8 PERCENT IN 1978 FROM
THE FIRST HALF OF LAST YEAR. TOURISM IS GUATEMALA'S
NUMBER THREE FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNER AFTER COFFEE AND
COTTON. UNDER UTILIZATION OF TOURIST FACILITIES,
ESPECIALLY IN THE CAPITAL CITY, IS A SOURCE OF DEVELOPING
PRESSURE UPON THE GOG TO EXPAND AIR COMPETITION AND TOUR-
IST PROMOTION IN THE US TRAVEL MARKET.
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Message Attributes

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